

RACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS

Agency



Theme	Microaggression	Message
Alien in Own Land When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born.	Asking an Asian co-worker, "Where are you from? No, where are you <i>really</i> from?" Telling an American born Latino they speak such good English.	You are not American.
Ascription of Intelligence Assigning a degree of intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race.	A co-worker responds with surprise when an Asian American talks about struggling with math in high school. Telling an African American "You are so articulate."	All Asians are smart and good at math. It is unusual for people of color to speak standard English and with intellect.
Color Blindness Statements which indicate that a person does not want to acknowledge race.	When a staff member of color attempts to discuss being the only person of color on staff and feeling alienated and dismissed by her co-workers, a staff member says, "Do you think you're being a little too sensitive? We should emphasize similarities, not people's differences." When a staff member confides in a colleague that he thinks another staff person is treating him badly because of his race, the colleague replies "I don't think "Mike" would do something like that. He seems to treat everyone the same regardless of race."	Race and culture are not important variables that affect people's lives. Your racial experiences are not valid.
Criminality/Assumption of Criminal Status A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race.	Blacks and Latino staff are consistently asked to show identification while their white colleagues are not.	You are a criminal.
Denial of Individual Racism A statement made when whites renounce their racial biases.	A new hire asks her supervisor if race is addressed in the organization. The supervisor replies, "Race does not affect the way we work with one another. We treat everyone the same." A staff brings up racism with her manager. She replies, "I totally understand. As a woman, I face discrimination too."	Your racial/ethnic experience is not important. Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression.
Myth of Meritocracy Statements which assert that race does not play a role in succeeding in career advancement or education.	A co-worker says to a colleague, "This is America. Anyone can succeed if they work hard enough." When a staff member of color complains about being passed over for promotion, his colleague replies, "Maybe if you work harder you'll get promoted next time."	People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder. If you don't succeed, you have only yourself to blame (blaming the victim).

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Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/white culture are ideal.	A Black man speaks loudly with affect when engaging in discussion with co-workers. One of the co-workers complains to her supervisor saying she is fearful and sees his behavior as inappropriate. An Asian or Native American descent has trouble maintaining eye contact with his supervisor. The supervisor assumes he is being disrespectful.	Assimilate to dominant culture. Leave your cultural baggage outside.
Second-Class Citizen Occurs when a white person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a person of color.	White staff members get called on more often and are more frequently asked their opinions in staff meetings. A white person is served first by the office staff when a person of color arrives before them.	Whites are more valued than people of color. White students are more valued than students of color.
Environmental Microaggressions Macro-level microaggressions, which are more apparent on a systemic level.	The magazines in the lobby and pictures on the wall are geared towards white dominant culture. White people are the protagonists of all of the required reading in class.	You don't belong/Only white people can succeed. You are an outsider/You don't exist.

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Sue, D.W., Capodilupo, C.M., Torino, G.C., Bucceri, J., Holder, A.M.B., Nadal, K.L., Esquilin, M., Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice. American Psychologist. 2007 vol.62, No. 4